The House Investigation: The Power and the Glory and the Infighting HW 9/22/76

Yesterday Bud Fensterwald told Jim Leasr what has to be a lie: that he heard on the radio that I'm to be the staff director of the House investigation.

Jim laughed and said there are two people who believe someone has to be outside of government criticizing it, Nader and me. He wondered at the time what Bud was up to. I told him it had not happened, I was made no such offer and would not accept one. He had not yet received my letter to Feeney. He had that Bud asked me to write him 9 or 10.

Then I had a long conversation with Scott Malone, who says he is the one who negotiated the Blacl Caucus deal. According to Scott there is already bitter fighting between the Downing and the Gonzalez factions, over Bud. The Downing group wants Bud to be both general counsel and staff director.

It does not appear to be that the Gonzalezites have another candidate. Rather that they just don't want Bud. I presume this is the Weberman influence. Scott says he saw Weberman one night, out in Montgomery County, with a bunch of kids in various stages of being out of it with drugs.

According to Scott all factions are against Lane, even the Schweiker staff remnant. He believes it likely that Lane will be a consultant. So will Morrow, of whom the story now is that the book is a fake but he has the real stuff he is holding back! The book is now called a fictionalized version of the real truth.

Scott expects to be tyeir Mafia expert.

Kevin Walsh, who quite Lane's CCI to get a Hill job and then was opposed in it by Lane, is back. He is living temporarily with Mark Allen, one of the Univ. Va. students who turned Downing on originally. Both want jobs on the committee. An earlier report, third-hand from Groden, is that he, too, is to be a consultant.

Scott was pressing me hard to recommend a general counsel for Downing instead of Bud. I refused, telling him honestly that there is nobody I can recommend, that they don't need a politician, they need a good criminal lawyer and that those they may get who are supposedly informed will begin with misinformation that will be a handicap and will have to be unlearned. I said one with a good earlier record on a Congressional committee might be a good choice. My feeling is not that Scott was trying to get a handle for himself by influencing who becomes counsel but rather than he is concerned about their having a good one and over healing the breach.

Feeney is to be assistant staff director, rather unusual. He is Downing's man and a general counsel has enough to do. He ought not fill both posts.

Bud's conflicts of interest are apparent, having been Ray's lawyer and having his own CTIA. But they appear not to be apparent enough for Bud, Downing & co. I later told Jim that while warning Bud would do no good he should be warned that this can ruin him and that if I have to be part of it I will be and am well prepared. Jim is not to tell him with what.

It is all from a madhouse. Walsh appears to be educated in criminalistics but to have no employment at it. Allen is serious and well-intended but goes for the attractive theories. They appear to be closest to reality of all. All of them can be ridiculed no end for their records in the field, especially Downing and Gonzalez, the Members. They don't know enough not to be manipulated by the executive agencies, who appear not to have been making an effort to influence the vote to establish the committee. That was agreed to by the House leadership. I doubt Ford would overtly show any hand before the election. This is to say that there has been no opposition - yet.